



From the Institute of Physics

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Citation: *J. Rheol.* **2**, 448 (1931); doi: 10.1122/1.2116402

View online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1122/1.2116402>

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FROM THE INSTITUTE OF PHYSICS

TO MEMBERS AND FELLOWS OF

THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY
THE OPTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA
THE ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA
THE SOCIETY OF RHEOLOGY

By action of the Councils of your several societies the American Institute of Physics has now been established under a managing board, listed on the heading above, composed of three representatives elected by the Council of each of the four coöperating societies. The Institute of Physics is to be "an agency for studying the common problems of the organizations representing physics in America and for undertaking thereafter such functions as the coöperating societies may assign to it." The subjects that the Institute has already been commissioned to study are briefly the problems of publications in physics, their better correlation and adaptation and means of better financial support; the questions of helpful contacts and closer relations among all the organizations and groups, local or extended, interested in physics; and the subject of the relations of physics and physicists with the public, which resolves itself on the one hand into interesting and informing the public by use of effective channels of publicity and on the other hand to seeking more support for physics from the public.

An essential part of the plan of the Institute was the securing of a competent full-time Executive Secretary or Director to lead its work. The Governing Board takes pleasure in announcing the appointment as Director of the Institute of Physics Mr. Henry A. Barton, formerly Research Engineer with the American Telephone and Telegraph Co., Ph.D., Princeton, 1925, National Research Fellow in Physics at Harvard University, Research Fellow at the Bartol Foundation, and Recently Assistant Professor of Physics at Cornell University. Dr. Barton began his work on October 1, 1931, with offices at 654 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Since a most pressing problem before the Institute is that of finding a plan which will give the most effective service in publications in physics, and which at the same time may gain adequate financial support for these publications, the Governing Board has requested the University of Minnesota to consent to the part-time release of Professor John T. Tate during

the coming year in order that he may work in collaboration with Dr. Barton in preparing a coördinated publication plan for presentation to the Governing Board. The University of Minnesota has agreed to this under arrangements that have now been effected.

The Chemical Foundation has undertaken to finance the initial stages of the Institute of Physics and has generously afforded office space and clerical assistance to the Institute. Mr. Wm. W. Buffum, Manager of the Chemical Foundation, has, at the request of the Governing Board, agreed to serve as Treasurer of the Institute of Physics.

The Institute of Physics has come into being in direct response to a generally felt and widely expressed desire that means be developed for profiting by more concerted action and broader opportunities of association and intercourse on the part of the rapidly increasing body of physicists, and for presenting a more united front for physics before the public. In several conferences of representative physicists it was agreed that the most effective and feasible method of coördinating the activities of physicists and of coöperating for the advancement of physics would not lie in the direction of a merging of all existing societies into one large society, but would rather take the form of a coöperative agency to handle, for the coöperating societies, such matters of business, of policy, and of organization as might increase interest in and support for physics. The steps leading immediately to the formation of the Institute of Physics were taken after definite encouragement by the Chemical Foundation. Mr. Francis P. Garvan, president of that foundation, stated to a committee of the American Physical Society that the Chemical Foundation would be ready to lend support, financially and otherwise, through the most suitably constituted and widely representative agency, to the advancement of physics in America.

This plan of an American Institute was first approved in principle by the American Physical Society and by the Acoustical Society of America at their meetings last December. It was approved in more detail by the councils of the coöperating societies following a report in March, 1931, of a joint committee.

The Director of the Institute plans to be present at meetings of the several societies. It is hoped that members will discuss freely with him the plans of the Institute. Dr. Barton will be glad to have members call upon or communicate with him at the office and particularly invites your correspondence and suggestions as to the work and opportunities of the Institute.

Faithfully yours,

KARL T. COMPTON, Chairman of the Governing Board

Oct., 1931